



STATE SENATOR  
**BRUCE PATTERSON**  
**IN THE LOOP** ★

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10/3/05

### **Patterson to hold Hearing on Downriver International Crossing – Trenton**

Sen. Bruce Patterson will conduct a formal hearing before his Committee on Technology and Energy, on Wednesday, October 5, at 7:00 p.m., at Trenton High School Auditorium, 2901 Charlton Road, Trenton, 48183. The public will be able to hear the issues raised by proposals for a crossing to Canada: What impacts would such a traffic route impose on Downriver communities? On the International Wildlife Sanctuary? On the economy and environment in general? Why does MDOT continue with “studies” when previous analysis has shown such Downriver propositions to be “not feasible”? Will MDOT respond to pressure to be fiscally responsible? Who benefits by conducting pointless ‘studies’?

### **Senate to move groundwater protection plan this fall**

Legislation to protect Michigan’s groundwater will be before the Senate by the end of October, Senate Republicans have announced. Due to water being an important natural resource and major economic asset to Michigan, the state must be proactive in managing its uses to ensure it remains abundant and available for future generations. Senate Republicans outlined the following legislative actions:

- Establishing a way to assess impacts of new high-capacity water use on surface water, natural resources and nearby existing wells.
- Implementing a groundwater protection system based on groundwater inventory maps.
- Setting up a Groundwater Use certification system that includes permits for high-capacity users.
- Creating a water use reporting system.
- Continuing the Groundwater Conservation Advisory Council to provide ongoing recommendations.

This comes on the heels of a meeting hosted by Sen. Patterson, September 6, when the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, chaired by Sen. Patty Birkholz, met in Northville. The Committee held meetings all around the state this summer for local input. Sen. Patterson is a member of the committee, and has written several significant bills about water.

## **Purple Heart monument**

A bill to allow for a monument near the state Capitol honoring Purple Heart recipients has been introduced in the Senate. The legislation was requested by the Military Order of the Purple Heart - Department of Michigan, which also will cover the expenses of the monument's placement. The national organization is seeking to place identical monuments at each state capitol. To date, monuments have been placed at 43 state capitols across the nation. The legislation will allow the monument to be placed in Veterans' Memorial Park, which is located at the state Capitol complex in Lansing. According to the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first American award made available to the common soldier. It was initially created as the Badge of Military Merit by one of the world's most famed and best-loved heroes - General George Washington. The legislation, Senate Bill 764, has been referred to the Senate Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs.

## **Patterson's Internet 'hunting' ban now in effect**

Hunters in Michigan take pride in the ethical standards they exercise and teach. Recent technology, however, was creating a system for aiming and firing a weapon at a caged animal by remote control, at the click of a mouse. Sen. Patterson and several fellow legislators were appalled. With the help of animal rights lawyers, a set of bills were drawn to outlaw the practice in Michigan, even if the animal is located elsewhere. The governor has now signed the Act.

## **FIRE ! Patterson eases worries in Plymouth Township**

Dreaded word! Plymouth Township's western sector water system will receive help before long. Sen. Patterson's Senate Bill 566 has gone to the House. It will take 1.18 acres of the disused Western Wayne Correctional Facility and grant it to the Township for a watertower. It is at the local highpoint, near Beck Road and Five Mile Road, an ideal location. Homes and businesses will get improved water service. It is hoped the tower can be built and functioning by Fall, 2006.

## **Crime Victim's Rights Act**

House Bill 4588 was amended in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where Sen. Patterson is a member, and is now set to be passed by the whole legislature. It will increase protections, and means of restitution, to crime victims. It strengthens an existing statute in several ways, and will now:

- Include in the list of payments for restitution an amount equal to income actually lost by the spouse, parent, sibling, child, or grandparent of the victim if the family member left employment, either temporarily or permanently, to care for the victim.
- Further restrict an offender's ability to profit from his or her criminal actions by prohibiting the sale of memorabilia of the person or the crime, or the sale of the perpetrator's property that has had its value increased or enhanced by the person's notoriety.
- Similarly amend a provision pertaining to forfeiture of proceeds received or to be received by the defendant from contracts relating to the crime.

Under current law, proceeds ordered forfeited from such sales must be placed in an escrow account and the act details a priority for distribution of the funds with payments for restitution ranking first. The bill will add distributions to repay fines, costs, and other assessments ordered against the defendant and would place it last in priority.

## **Universities & Environment benefit with Business-like Plates**

Before an Oct. 1 legal ‘sunset’ put out the lights on an important source of funds for historic lighthouses, universities and other special interest groups, Sen. Patterson stepped in to ensure continued production of specialty fundraising license plates.

Senate Bill 248 removes the Oct.1 sunset and removes a limit on the number of specialty plates in Michigan. This will allow for fundraising plates for additional interest groups. New groups wanting a specialty license plate will pay a \$15,000 one-time fee to cover the start-up costs “Taking a business-like approach will benefit the state,” said Patterson. “New applicants will be able to design a plate because my bill removes the risk to the state when making new plates, as the start-up cost is borne by the applicants.”

Patterson explained, “Groups like Ducks Unlimited, a leading wetlands conservation group, have wanted a license plate, but could not get one due to the current limit. He continued, “Wetlands will benefit from expanded license plate sales. Our wetlands are essential to a healthy environment, cleaning water through natural filtration, and preventing erosion, as well as providing habitat for all manner of God’s creatures. Healthy wetlands balance our world. Sale of these plates will fund these and other worthy projects. This will move Michigan’s environmental preservation forward at a much quicker pace. And it won’t be only the ducks that benefit from this.” The bill is now in the House for consideration.

## **Governor signed post-Labor Day school start bill**

Advocates claimed that Michigan parents, students and tourism-related business owners would get a benefit by requiring schools to start after Labor Day. The new starting date will let parents take longer trips on the extended weekend without having their children miss school days. The legislation passed, despite Sen. Patterson’s No vote. “Education is my Number One priority. Period,” he stated. “This has always been my position. Local schools will know what is best for them. I believe the matter could have been left there. In my view, Education was put second by this legislation.”

## **Senate would assist school districts in educating Hurricane Katrina victims**

Action by the Michigan Senate would assist school districts in taking in students displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The chamber approved an amendment to the state school-aid bill that allows districts to count evacuated students toward their per-pupil funding amount. The amendment would allow the Michigan Department of Education to include affected students who enroll in a district past the normal count date. Since Proposal A, Michigan school districts are funded on a “per-pupil” basis meaning the amount of funding each district receives is directly related to the number of students enrolled. Under the amendment, schools will receive funding for displaced

students even if they were not enrolled at the time of the fall student count. The Michigan Dept. of Education has also sent information to school superintendents throughout the state to facilitate the provision of educational services to any evacuees in need.

## **Patterson awarded for ‘Distinguished Service’ by MI Municipal League**

On September 22, during its annual convention in Grand Rapids, the MML announced that Sen. Bruce Patterson was the 2005 recipient of its “Distinguished Service” award, honoring the work he has done to make local government more efficient and effective, and to foster greater cooperation between units of local government, such as the Watershed Alliance Act of 2004. This is the ninth such award that Sen. Patterson has received while serving in the Legislature.

## **UP-COMING DISTRICT EVENTS for your Calendar:**

### **Flat Rock Office Hours**

Sue Trussell, District Director for Sen. Patterson, will conduct Office Hours in Flat Rock on October 10, at the Flat Rock Community Center, from 11:00am to 1:00pm. The Community Center is at 1 Maguire Street (Gibraltar Road and I-75), Flat Rock, MI. (734) 379-1450. Come on it, meet Sue, and share your thoughts and concerns. Sen. Patterson wants to know what you are thinking.

### **Breakfast with Bruce**

You can join Sen. Patterson for breakfast on Monday, October 17. The Breakfast will be at the Woodhaven Community Center, in the Senior Wing, and run from 9-10:30am. Arrangements are being made for a speaker on the subject of “identity theft”, a growing, national concern. How can you keep your own identity from being swiped from you? Who can get your personal Information, how and where might they get it, and what can they do with it, if stolen?

### **Contact Information**

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) >. You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.

See the *Legislative Questionnaire* on the Website, too! Your responses are welcomed!